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Evaluation

Evaluation of the fourth Global Programme

Executive summary

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I. Introduction

1. The Executive Board approved the fourth UNDP Global Programme, 2009-2011, at its second regular session of 2008 (decision 2008/32). The Global Programme was subsequently extended to 2013, consistent with the decision to extend the strategic plan (DP/2009/9). The Global Programme was designed to strengthen UNDP development cooperation at the country, regional and global levels through supporting the analysis of development problems and providing context-specific development solutions. Given its importance to furthering the objectives of the UNDP strategic plan and facilitating its contribution to the global and regional public good, the UNDP Evaluation Office conducted an evaluation of the programme in 2012, which is summarized in the present report. This was the third evaluation of the Global Programme conducted by the Evaluation Office.

2. The objective of the evaluation was to assess programme performance, draw conclusions and offer key recommendations for strengthening effectiveness. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the Global Programme:

(a) Contributed to the accomplishment of organizational development and institutional results;

(b) Established or strengthened the comparative advantage of UNDP as a major upstream global policy actor for poverty reduction and sustainable human development;

(c) Constituted an appropriate mechanism in providing development services, knowledge management and capacity-building;

(d) Contributed to furthering cross-cutting issues and inter-practice dimensions.

3. The Global Programme comprised: (a) multi-country 'global' projects, policy advisers and strategic partnerships; (b) support to thematic trust fund management; (c) development of knowledge products, networks and communities of practice; and (d) associated management dimensions. The evaluation examined all of these areas for the period 2009–2013 to ascertain whether the Global Programme's outcomes and results had been or were likely to be achieved. The degree to which the range of Global Programme interventions and activities contributed to achieving results in thematic and cross-cutting areas received particular attention.

4. The evaluation also considered a number of global developments including the global financial and economic crisis of 2008, the transformative changes associated with the "Arab Spring" and major international multilateral processes – such as the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and the formulation of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. The data and information gathered were both quantitative and qualitative.

5. The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of Global Programme activities to determine the programme's overall performance. The evaluation looked at advisory service outcomes, scalability and replication of pilot initiatives, and use of knowledge products. As factors related to efficiency cut across all practice areas and were broadly related to organizational management, efficiency was assessed as part of Global Programme management. Assessing the sustainability of some Global Programme results was difficult when small and short-term interventions were not clearly linked to country office outcomes.

6. The evaluation used data and information from multiple sources, including: (a) desk reviews and document analyses; (b) surveys and questionnaires; (c) stakeholder consultations and interviews at UNDP headquarters, regional service centres, thematic centres and select countries; and (d) cybermetric analysis. Triangulation was used to draw on a range of sources to verify individual interpretations and judgements. Over 275 people were consulted during the course of the evaluation at headquarters and in 45 country offices. Visits were made to 15 countries. Pretested surveys of country offices and policy advisers were used. Of the 145 programme countries targeted, 125 responded to the survey. Of the 88 policy advisers, 58 responded to the survey. The evaluation used the data and analysis of five independent regional programme evaluations, and the assessment of development results and thematic evaluations conducted during the assessment period, which were used as background information for the contribution made by UNDP programmes. Where available, data were obtained from the Services Trackers of Advisory Services managed by the regional service centres and

the corporate survey of UNDP (Global Products and Services Surveys). The evaluation team examined advisory service patterns among several regional service centres and within the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP). Cybermetric analysis was used to assess UNDP website visits, geographic location of users, online trends in citation of UNDP reports and documentation, the types of organizations citing UNDP documents, and knowledge products other than publications. The analysis encompassed visits to online platforms such as Teamworks (unteamworks.org) and Teamworks-based communities of practice.

7. The evaluation utilized a quantitative approach to assess each of the four evaluation criteria and applied weighting to determine an overall Global Programme rating; and the performance of each practice area and key programme components, such as advisory services, knowledge management and Global Programme projects. Evaluation criteria and key questions for each criterion formed the basis for the rating system.

8. The evaluation covered all five geographic regions where UNDP works and examined programme performance at the global, regional and country levels. Global Programme responsiveness to the priorities of individual regional programmes approved by the Executive Board was included in the evaluation. At the regional level, the evaluation examined Global Programme support to six UNDP regional service centres located in Bangkok, Bratislava, Cairo, Dakar, Johannesburg and Panama City. The evaluation also reviewed the contributions of the three global thematic centres that were part of the Global Programme-supported practice architecture: the Drylands Development Centre; the Oslo Governance Centre; and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth. At the country level, the evaluation assessed synergies between the Global Programme and country programmes and the outcomes of the support received.

II. Background

9. Promoting and sustaining economic and social development over extended periods has been increasingly challenging to development efforts and needed adaptive strategies. Multiple crises, some of them global in nature, together with the need to respond to conflict in more than 30 countries, have slowed progress towards sustainable development goals. Improving human development outcomes remains a key concern for many developing countries. The implications of the changing global context for development agencies have also been enormous. Resources to address the complex challenges decreased; official development assistance fell by 3 per cent in 2011 and is expected to stagnate during 2013–2015. For UNDP, the competing agendas of new efforts to accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, support countries facing the threat of reversal of human development gains, and strengthen democratic institutions and public services made the complex corporate policy and programme template even more challenging. The complexity of issues also points to the need for strategizing and adaptation in responding to key development priorities.

10. The Global Programme modality of producing institutional results relied on fully realizing and improving the practice architecture, which entailed a network of advisers who managed, guided and supported the implementation of global-level interventions and aimed to bring consistency and coherence to regional-level work among UNDP practice areas. The practice architecture had a broad scope and supported the implementation of the key results areas of the strategic plan in seven areas: (a) capacity development; (b) democratic governance; (c) energy and the environment; (d) HIV, health and development; (e) gender equality; (f) knowledge management; and (h) poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals. Practice groups were responsible for all aspects of Global Programme implementation.

11. Global Programme activities aimed to support development and institutional goals set out by the UNDP strategic plan. They entailed: providing innovative approaches to meeting development challenges; supporting multi-dimensional approaches to national development planning; and ensuring that country-level realities and needs were reflected in global debates and mechanisms. In addition, the Global Programme aimed to support implementation of a practice approach and service delivery model; and to promote responsive, streamlined policy advisory services and high-quality, relevant

knowledge products. Global Programme-sponsored initiatives intended to contribute to United Nations partnerships by clarifying comparative advantage and collaboration mechanisms, establishing partnerships, and integrating United Nations partners into 'Teamworks' and the service delivery model.[1]

12. In each practice area, the Global Programme aimed to provide:

(a) substantive direction, defining the strategy behind each thematic practice and broad areas of intervention;

(b) facilitation of UNDP engagement in global debate and dialogue, influencing the substantive discussion of development issues and challenges;

(c) policy development assistance, shaping global and regional funds and programmes based on country experiences by involving local programmes in international and United Nations system processes;

(d) policy and programme support, by defining policy options, identifying Southern solutions, building the capacities of country offices and stakeholders, offering advisory services and developing and adapting knowledge products and publications.

III. Key findings

13. The Global Programme had the challenging task of providing viable programming strategies for convergence of global and regional programme efforts, and also being relevant to a wide range of country contexts and regional priorities. The Global Programme contribution should not duplicate the work of other programmes, for example, regional and country programmes. The other question that the analysis of findings raises is whether the Global Programme, in the present form, is the appropriate approach for achieving the goals outlined.

14. The evaluation found that the Global Programme has yet to find the appropriate balance between support to country-level work and the activities that have wider relevance in supporting UNDP in global and regional public goods. Given the limited resources and broad and ambitious scope, it was challenging for the Global Programme to respond to multiple complex goals. In addition, many issues related to the Global Programme pertain to larger programming and institutional arrangements that need UNDP-wide action. Many challenges and limitations of global programming presented here are not unique to UNDP and are common to many multilateral agency programmes.

A. The Global Programme contribution was important to UNDP participation in global policy debates.

15. Global Programme support to policy efforts was more evident in areas where there were established programmes. There were examples of sustained policy engagement, for example, on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Global Programme support enabled UNDP to generate momentum within the United Nations for the 2010 High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly by drawing key lessons from cross-country evidence and articulating proposals that helped to shape the meeting's outcome. In the area of support to electoral systems and processes, the UNDP portfolio of democratic governance programmes, extensive in-country presence, leadership role in post-conflict contexts and ongoing partnerships with national Governments positioned the agency as a global and regional policy player. Particularly notable is the contribution of the Global Programme to a series of policy dialogues around global climate negotiations and the emergence of new biodiversity and ecosystems service frameworks. Outcomes were more visible in areas where UNDP had organizational commitment, such as the Secretary-General's initiative on Sustainable Energy for All and regional and policy discourse through the UNDP biodiversity programme. In partnership with the Global Gender and Climate Alliance, UNDP contributed to global advocacy and awareness-raising at various global conferences on climate change and sustainable development,

[1] UNDP Executive Board, 2008, UNDP Global Programme, 2009–2011' (DP/2008/32), New York, 12 September.

including Rio+20 and both the seventeenth (2011) and eighteenth (2012) sessions of the Conference to the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

16. The policy engagement of UNDP within the United Nations system was greater in comparison to collaboration with other multilateral and bilateral development agencies. UNDP used and often combined various policy engagement tools, such as commissioning and publishing research on critical issues, conducting analyses of national policy reforms in developing countries, facilitating policy engagement and participating in policy dialogue. Some of these strategies were more effective than others, and the evaluation concluded that a coherent approach to policy engagement was lacking. Although there were examples of participation in policy work by UNDP, its contribution cannot be determined in every case, as each of the examples involved several other development actors. Successful cases underscored the importance of a sustained UNDP contribution at critical intervals.

17. The Global Programme complemented UNDP policy efforts at the regional level. While the level of engagement with the regional institutions varied across regions, UNDP work in Africa followed a more systematic approach to engaging with regional institutions than in other regions. UNDP policy and advocacy activities at the regional level, while important, were not adequate given the rapidly evolving development context. The evaluation found that strategic engagement with regional institutions, such as in Africa, was crucial for regional policy and the public good.

B. The substance and scope of global projects varied considerably. Many projects promoted new ideas or approaches, but cross-country learning and replication remained a challenge.

18. The evaluation highlighted that global umbrella projects, both in terms of content and scope, had a greater possibility of providing new ideas and models for country programmes, compared to projects with limited scope and scale. Also, some Global Programme projects were catalytic for mobilizing additional funding for UNDP.

19. A large number of projects often did not lend themselves to drawing global or regional lessons. Small-scale individual projects lacked the leveraging capacity necessary to inform country programmes. For most projects, it was a challenge to play a catalytic role in promoting approaches with relevance to country programmes and national planning and policy. Cross-country activities required a certain scale of implementation. With exceptions, global projects did not attract additional donor funding or follow-up financing, and there was no proactive resource mobilization to scale up successful projects. Several projects were reduced in scope due to lack of funding. Thematic trust funds were not always sufficient for global implementation, and there were not many instances where matching resources were provided by regional and country programmes. Phased replication was done in the case of a few projects such as the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework and governance assessment.

C. A strategic capacity development approach has yet to be fully embedded in UNDP work at the country level. The Global Programme faced challenges in responding to the needs of the country offices to effectively support Governments in national capacity development. Global Programme efforts were not adequate in facilitating a sector-specific approach to capacity development.

20. Global Programme activities faced limitations in facilitating a coherent approach to integrating capacity development in UNDP programmes. Meeting country offices' needs and expectations, which were often sector-specific, was challenging. While some of the needs pertained to having access to better tools (e.g., improved assessment tool design), many offices needed support in developing strategies for building sectoral and national planning capacities, and for integrating capacity development into country programming. Although a large quantity of tools and knowledge products were produced, their use remained sporadic due to relevance and usability issues. There were also challenges in addressing the needs of different types of countries. Country offices in middle-income countries found the programme support provided by the advisers to be useful.

D. Perceptions of advisory services and levels of satisfaction varied across regions and practices.

21. The range of UNDP thematic engagement has expanded over time, while the number of advisers has contracted, leaving large areas insufficiently covered. Multiple time-consuming tasks compromised the effectiveness of advisory services. BDP and regional centre advisers were responsible for producing knowledge products, supporting UNDP engagement in policy discourse, managing or supporting global projects, and supporting country offices. For headquarter advisers, implementation of global projects and thematic trust funds consumed a significant amount of time. The business model of the UNDP policy bureaus necessitates multiple roles for advisory and other professional staff. There were concerns that separating the programme management role and advisory and policy support services would result in fewer policy advisers than at present. Many senior UNDP staff believed that the policy contributions of the BDP advisers were undermined by the preoccupation with project implementation, and that advisory staff should be relieved of this role.

22. The advisory services were not adequately maximized for technical and policy support or for engaging in global policy discourse. Advisory services comprised a wide range of activities, ranging from policy advice, resource mobilization for the policy function, programme planning, project implementation and technical backstopping to document quality assurance, provision of training and collating and disseminating lessons and other knowledge. The evaluation found that country office backstopping was a significant component of the Global Programme's advisory support. The analysis of the advisory services indicated that: (a) the contribution made by advisory services to country programmes was strong in areas where there were established programmes at the global level; (b) supplementing country office capacities was generally perceived positively; (c) the quality of advisory services was uneven; (d) the broad range of services offered greater choice to country offices with small teams and capacity gaps; and (e) country offices had a low level of awareness of the advisory services.

23. In terms of relevance and effectiveness, backstopping, project-level support, provision of a corporate perspective and areas where there was no local expertise were rated as high, and the contribution to the UNDP global and regional policy dialogue as moderate. Ratings were lower for meeting country offices' needs, duration of support and the quality of the strategic and policy support available. Outcomes of advisory services to the country offices could not be determined in all cases, or could not be attributed to the advice provided. In several instances, the advice provided was either for a short duration or did not entail the level of technical expertise required for more substantive technical and policy support. UNDP established a wide range of partnerships with policy and research institutions and think tanks, but only a limited number could supplement UNDP advisory services. There were also instances where policy and technical support received from partners did not have the ownership of the country office and was not followed through.

24. The level of satisfaction with the advisory services among country offices varied across regions. Satisfaction was higher in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, and Africa compared to other regions. In Latin America and the Caribbean, views of usefulness were mixed, with some areas of support seen more favourably than others. Comparatively, country offices in the Arab States region were generally less positive about advisory support from both the Cairo centre and headquarters.

25. There were examples of technical and policy support to country programme and partner government strategies in each practice area, including advisory support to the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework in over 40 countries; support to transitional justice in the Arab States region and in Latin America; support to human rights institutions; and capacity and governance assessments in several countries.

26. According the country office survey, among the practice areas, support to environment and sustainable development was rated highest, followed by democratic governance and poverty. HIV, health and development, gender equality and knowledge management were given moderately satisfactory ratings. Several interviewees across regions acknowledged the high level of technical skills of the environment advisers. In the governance area, services related to elections, electoral systems and parliamentary developments were considered useful by country offices. Poverty and Millennium Development Goal support were seen as most satisfactory in Africa and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States compared to the other practices. Across the regions, support

was seen as most useful in filling staffing gaps, particularly during crisis situations, and in facilitating project implementation.

27. Coordination between the Global Programme and regional programmes was good in some regional centres but left considerable scope for improvement in others. The Global Programme supported the Southern African Development Community in developing a results framework for mainstreaming HIV into strategic non-health sectors, including environment, infrastructure, justice, local governance and planning and finance. Support to strengthening human rights institutions was another example, through partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. However, coherence between regional and Global Programme approaches and implementation varied considerably. Existing systems for the provision and monitoring of advisory services were found to be uneven; although systems were in place for tracking services in the Bangkok, Bratislava, and Panama City centres, they were non-existent in other regions and at headquarters.

28. The country offices were in need of high-quality, often cutting-edge technical and policy advice to support counterpart Governments. However, expectations were not met, often due to the generalist nature of the services provided. Technical backstopping and project-level support comprised a large part of Global Programme advisory services. Advisory services were often all-purpose in nature, which often led to the perception that the Global Programme teams did not have advanced expertise in individual practice areas in the different contexts where UNDP works.

E. Growing emphasis in the corporate programme frameworks on knowledge management as a factor in the contribution to development results did not translate into adequate concrete measures.

29. Global Programme support to the knowledge practice was important in drawing the attention of UNDP to the critical need for systematic knowledge management. Considerable integration challenges remained, however. Knowledge management remained at the periphery of corporate programming, particularly when compared to core practices and country programme work. The evaluation also found knowledge generation and sharing activities to be poorly monitored.

30. At headquarter and regional levels, different types of knowledge management activities did not receive the same level of attention at either strategic or implementation levels. Global Programme support focused mainly on building the Teamworks platform. Interviews underscored the need for greater strategic clarity in the areas of knowledge production, codification and sharing; connecting people within UNDP and with the broader development community; technology use; and linking knowledge to learning. All of these were prerequisites to positioning UNDP as a knowledge organization. The knowledge management strategy emphasized connectivity rather than production, collation and systematic sharing. The focus on Teamworks skewed attention away from other areas of knowledge-sharing. At the time of the evaluation, having already invested considerable time in building Teamworks, UNDP dedicated efforts to improving the platform for cataloguing, storing and sharing information. Still, certain concerns persisted, ranging from insufficient site and document search options to connectivity, access by outsiders and lack of integration with other UNDP systems and email-based communities of practice.

31. Knowledge production and management were dispersed within UNDP, and there was no centralized system to catalogue and make available all the published documents. The main challenge was the compartmentalized nature of knowledge production, with limited sharing of research and analysis among headquarter units. Interviews also underscored that with some exceptions, BDP publications were of limited use for programming in crisis-affected countries and the tools were found to be too generic.

32. While there was a steady rise in the volume of publications, the quality of their content and their relevance varied considerably. Country programme experiences were not systematically captured, and many country offices did not draw on the existing body of knowledge products. The processes necessary for linking learning at global and country appear to be weak. There was also a lack of corporate direction to link knowledge to learning. One of the major issues regarding publications on

good practices and scaling up was that the context in which such practices worked was missing, thus making such publications of limited relevance for country offices.

33. There were limitations in both knowledge production and its use at the country level, a limitation that cannot be attributed to the Global Programme. Interregional learning was even more limited. Many country office staff members believed that the UNDP country programming approach was not strategic. Although country programming took place within the broad parameters of the UNDP strategic plan, there was no strategic country-level link with agency approaches at the global and regional levels. A notable exception is the national Human Development Reports, where UNDP has been successful in providing a shared understanding of their purpose and approach.

F. Implementation of the gender equality strategy was not strong enough to address the development and institutional gender priorities of UNDP. Global Programme resources were essential in supporting gender-related activities.

34. UNDP corporate policy emphasized the importance of addressing gender disparities for equitable and sustainable development. During the period under review, efforts were made to institutionalize accountability mechanisms to ensure that UNDP programmes are gender-responsive. While there was progress in mainstreaming gender in UNDP work, the pace was not commensurate with the needs of the organization. Progress in operationalizing accountability mechanisms and integrating gender targets into performance management have been insufficient for promoting gender dimension in programmes, particularly at the country level.

35. There were limitations in developing thematic approaches for mainstreaming gender in UNDP programmes. UNDP did not adequately build on its extensive presence in the areas of poverty and the Millennium Development Goals, democratic governance, environment and energy, and crisis prevention and recovery to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. Gender equality was an important dimension of support to elections, political participation and achievement of the Goals, but was inconsistently addressed across the themes and components of governance and poverty reduction programmes. Despite the impressive number of UNDP projects in public administration and efforts to address gender equality therein, there was no comprehensive global tracking of women's participation in policy- and decision-making in public administration at national and subnational levels. At the level of the regional service centres, although gender mainstreaming was included in the work plans, there were challenges in implementation and the resources available for integrating gender were limited. Some of the issues went beyond the Global Programme and there were limitations in the attention paid to gender-related concerns in country programming.

G. The Global Programme helped to raise the priority of supporting South-South solutions, but challenges with mainstreaming remained at the corporate level, where South-South cooperation needed to be adequately articulated and institutionalized within UNDP programme implementation.

36. Opportunities for promoting South-South cooperation varied across regions. Regional bureaus and service centres facilitated South-South engagement to the best of their abilities. Although not a primary activity, South-South exchanges, where they occurred, focused on topics such as climate change, energy efficiency, public administration, transition, and HIV and AIDS. Most regional service centres viewed knowledge facilitation as critical to engaging in South-South activities but believed that enough investment had not been made to systematically link knowledge facilitation with South-South exchange.

37. The Global Programme used thematic centres to promote South-South learning, and the evaluation found that there is scope for building on this experience. The thematic centres provided good examples of the roles they can play, but challenges remain in providing programmatic options for UNDP to mainstream South-South cooperation.

38. The level of engagement of the regional programme and service centres with regional institutions also played a role in the Global Programme's South-South cooperation work. The regional programme in Africa focused on working with the regional institutions and was in a better position to further South-South solutions. There were examples of collaboration that contributed to facilitating regional South-South learning. Evaluation findings indicated that the Global Programme had limitations in addressing the diverse needs of regional South-South engagement, particularly in

accommodating new actors and diverse contexts. South-South cooperation is a quickly evolving area that presents many options for engagement. UNDP and the Global Programme were inadequately responsive to emerging needs.

H. Improvement was evident in the cross-practice work in key thematic areas, although there were limitations in systematically promoting and institutionalizing such programming.

39. At the corporate policy level, attaining the Millennium Development Goals and promoting the human development approach provided considerable impetus for integrated cross-practice programming. Although UNDP policies recognized that compartmentalized programming could not achieve corporate priorities, this recognition did not translate into sustained efforts to promote integrated programming. The Global Programme identified outputs for cross-practice programming, but progress was uneven across practices. By their nature or scope, some activities were inclined more to cross-practice collaboration. Most cross-practice initiatives pertained to preparing guidelines and tools. The practices collaborated at both headquarters and regional service centres, but this collaboration had limited cross-thematic dimensions and involved few joint projects. The emphasis given to integrated programming in the design of the Global Programme did not manifest in actual implementation. Management arrangements conducive to cross-practice work were not in place.

40. Cross-practice programming was much easier when funds were provided for collaboration, as in the areas of HIV and the environment. At the regional service centres, practices that had more resources could better leverage them to engage with other practices. The HIV, health and development practice actively sought to promote cross-practice work, and achieved it to a considerable extent, which many attributed to the funding the practice had at its disposal. The cross-cutting areas of gender equality and capacity development generally found it difficult to engage in cross-practice work as they did not have funds to offer. Cross-practice engagement by large practices such as poverty, governance and environment was less forthcoming.

I. Alignment of global and regional programmes was important to the effectiveness of the regional-level practice architecture.

41. The Global Programme provided the base of the practice architecture, and its effectiveness depended on how the regional services centres were managed. The level of coordination between the regional bureaus and BDP varied. This had an important bearing on the integration of the global and regional programmes.

42. One of the challenges intrinsic to the design of the Global Programme is the weak linkages with country programmes. Shortcomings in responding to country office realities persisted across practice areas and were particularly evident in the Global Programme response to country office capacity needs. The practices worked best and provided most effective support to country offices when there was efficient collaboration with regional bureaus and service centres. Strong coordination was best exemplified in Asia and the Pacific and in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, where the alignment between global, regional and country-level programming was strongest and the Global Programme was most able to contribute to results.

43. Coordination between regional programmes and the Global Programme was not always consistent. Consultations between headquarters and regional bureaus or service centres were not adequate for enabling greater efficiency. All regional bureaus communicated the need for more systematic consultation in Global Programme design and implementation, global publication production and recruitment of advisory staff. Bureaus found that the same consultation was needed during the preparation of UNDP regional programmes.

44. The conclusions of the previous independent evaluation of the Global Programme[2] emphasized the need for strengthening corporate strategy and delivery mechanisms for appropriate support to country offices; partnering with United Nations agencies and development institutions to contribute to global policy; and implementing a results-oriented approach to the Global Programme. Progress in addressing these issues has been mixed.

[2] UNDP, 2008. Evaluation of the Global Cooperation Framework III. Evaluation Office, UNDP.

IV. Conclusions

45. **Conclusion 1: As a global development actor with extensive country presence, a vast scope of programming in key development areas and substantial convening power, UNDP was well positioned to play an important role in informing and influencing global policy debates. The Global Programme had mixed results in building on these strengths and enhancing contribution to country-level development results and global public goods.**

46. The Global Programme was partially successful in facilitating UNDP participation in global public goods, engaging in advocacy and supporting UNDP programme efforts. UNDP participated in global development and policy discussions in different programme areas, with comparatively better outcomes in the area of the Millennium Development Goals. The Global Programme was better at facilitating the institutional role of UNDP within the United Nations system, but less successful in furthering the wider policy engagement of UNDP at the global and regional levels. Although enabling a coherent United Nations approach to policy engagement is critical, this focus has undermined the policy contributions of UNDP. UNDP did not fully build on its country experience in global policy debates and public goods. Knowledge-sharing as key tool for global and regional policy engagement has yet to be explored. The performance of UNDP can be considerably improved by establishing stronger linkages between the global and country levels and by addressing the needs of different typologies of countries.

47. One area where the Global Programme could have been better used is the systematic promotion of the human development perspective in UNDP country programmes. Human development, while central to the UNDP policy framework, is not systematically pursued in UNDP programmes. The Global Programme advocated for human development in global policy debates, but very little was done to support its implementation in UNDP programmes.

48. The Global Programme performed well in programme areas where UNDP had well-established ongoing programmes and capacities. The Global Programme was less successful in trying new approaches and programmes that had scalability across programme countries. Limitations in catalyzing country programmes through new initiatives and innovative approaches, particularly in facilitating country offices to better inform national development strategies, undermined the added value of the Global Programme.

49. Despite employing a variety of partnership instruments, the Global Programme needs to do more to successfully adapt to the fast-changing development cooperation architecture and the evolving nature of partnerships. The lessons from the varied partnerships and instruments UNDP used were scantly documented or assessed to draw lessons. Project-based partnerships, which are greater in number, were less effective in addressing issues of global and regional public goods. Engagement in regional-level partnerships with regional institutions was more effective when the regional programme took a more strategic approach. UNDP faced limitations in effectively leveraging its comparative advantage while engaging with vertical funds.

50. **Conclusion 2: While the coherence of the practice architecture has considerably improved, its potential has yet to be fully realized. A strategic focus across practice areas is needed to maximize results. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the practice architecture depends on the autonomy the regional bureaus give to the regional service centres.**

51. The Global Programme's contribution in building the practice architecture at the global and regional levels has been important. Further coherence of practice architecture at the regional level is critical for achieving the Strategic Plan outcomes. Poor prioritization of activities within the practices has substantially reduced the contribution of the Global Programme. Fragmentation along different funding lines and compartmentalization of global and regional activities at the regional service centres has undermined the practice architecture's potential. There was better consolidation of practice architecture when regional service centres were allowed a greater role in managing the regional programme activities and resources.

52. **Conclusion 3: There is considerable scope for maximizing the contribution of advisory services and prioritizing the role of supporting programme country Governments.**

53. Advisory services are critical for bringing new ideas, evidence-based policy and good practices, but their full potential was not realized. The effectiveness of advisory services varied both in fulfilling this role and in meeting country offices' needs for specialized technical and policy support. The flexibility of advisory services allowed UNDP to support the capacity needs of the country offices and provide project-level support. Countries' evolving needs for policy and technical support and emerging fields of expertise called for a range of skills and subject expertise that were currently not available in all areas.

54. Advisory time and resources were not always used beneficially to make substantive contributions to country offices' needs. One-off interventions and a wide range of supplementary services had limited traction in strengthening country programmes or supporting programmatic approaches. Although some degree of flexibility is important, leaving the definition and scope of advisory services open to interpretation diluted their potential and led to suboptimal utilization of advisers' existing technical capacities.

55. Advanced thematic specialization is critical for UNDP to lead, at the global, regional and country levels, in informing and shaping policy agendas, supporting partner Governments, prioritizing UNDP programmes and leading discussions with donors. The lack of qualified specialists undermined the potential of advisory services to respond to the emerging policy and programme priorities of UNDP. Generalist advisers, while efficient in supporting project-related needs, were not suited to inform specific policies on key issues.

56. Long-term institutionalized partnerships with policy and research institutions are critical for UNDP, especially to complement areas where in-house thematic expertise was inadequate. This significantly constrained technical and policy support in some programme areas. In a rapidly changing global context that demands high-level, specialized technical expertise, the profile of the advisory services was inadequate.

57. **Conclusion 4: Knowledge production and sharing have yet to be institutionalized as a key programming principle. The Global Programme's contribution, while important, was not sufficient given the organization's knowledge management needs.**

58. UNDP knowledge facilitation tools have improved, but in a rapidly changing technological environment they are not adequate and suitable for institutional learning. Although there was a significant increase in the demand for knowledge to inform country programming, most country offices have yet to draw efficiently on all the knowledge generated within the organization, in a development environment that demands context specificity. Lack of adequate contextual analysis significantly diminished the use of global and regional publications for better understanding programme successes and failures. Processes for ensuring the quality and rigour of publications, which currently are inadequate, are critical to influence and inform UNDP programmes and the wider development agenda.

59. Lack of clear accountabilities at different levels of the programme undermined the UNDP knowledge-sharing and facilitation agenda. Challenges persisted in establishing linkages between knowledge production, sharing and learning. Furthermore, the narrow focus of the corporate knowledge management strategy constrained UNDP from taking a holistic approach to knowledge management. A major challenge to the country programme was that knowledge generation and sharing were not institutionalized and country programme lessons were not documented systematically.

60. **Conclusion 5: In recognition of the importance of context and varying needs of the broad range of areas in which UNDP works, UNDP needs to move from a generalized approach to a context-specific and thematic-specific approach in addressing cross-cutting issues, such as capacity development and gender.**

61. This is necessary for the Global Programme to provide the strategic direction required of it. The present approach to capacity development as a cross-cutting theme had inherent limitations in enabling a capacity development focus in UNDP programmes. The conceptual underpinnings and tools are not adequate to respond to the overriding needs of the country offices for sector-specific approaches to

capacity development and complex national development realities. UNDP has yet to move towards developing thematic- and sector-specific models to guide country programmes, something the country offices need. Challenges remain in meeting the demands for supporting Governments in developing appropriate strategies and facilitating nationally-driven solutions.

62. UNDP introduced corporate and institutional policy reforms in order to enhance its contributions to gender equality and further integrate gender into UNDP programmes. Although there was considerable recognition of gender-responsive programing, UNDP did not sufficiently leverage its extensive programme engagement to address gender inequalities in development. UNDP continues to follow a generalized approach and has yet to move towards developing specific strategies for systematically integrating gender into UNDP thematic areas. A thematic-specific mainstreaming strategy with a results focus is needed for strengthening the gender component in UNDP programmes.

63. **Conclusion 6: There were efforts to improve Global Programme management, but they have not been sufficient to substantially enhance performance in key areas of the Global Programme.**

64. Results-based management of the Global Programme needs considerable improvement. The Global Programme's design lacks adequate guidance on how to: (a) facilitate greater focus; (b) ensure coherence with regional and country programme priorities; and (c) address the needs of different typologies of countries.

65. UNDP made positive changes by establishing the Global Programme Advisory Committee and the Management Committee. However, these mechanisms were not fully effective in ensuring periodic follow up, quality assurance and more importantly, in enabling a strategic approach to the activities undertaken. The absence of a well-staffed management unit to support periodic assessment and oversight of Global Programme activities (or BDP activities) has led to poor management of the Global Programme. The lack of adequate outcome evaluations of the Global Programme and BDP programmes compromised results-based monitoring. There were few evaluations, and although there were exceptions, their quality generally was poor and of limited use for programme learning.

66. UNDP has made efforts during the current Global Programme to strengthen and improve the quality of its advisory services and develop better systems for tracking demand. Implementation remains a challenge, however. Effective monitoring of the advisory services depends on the clarity of their objectives. Despite efforts to streamline advisory services, monitoring continues to be input-oriented and the tracking of outcomes is minimal.

67. There was no shared understanding of what global projects should entail. The outcomes of the global projects were undermined because of small allocations to practice groups, spread thinly across activities, making it unwieldy to monitor results. Several activities which are minor in scale and scope and small multi-country projects are categorized as global projects, often with limited relevance for informing UNDP programmes.

V. Recommendations

68. **Recommendation 1: UNDP should strengthen the Global Programme to add value beyond what UNDP accomplishes through its regional and country programmes.**

69. The Global Programme and its various components should: provide conceptual clarity to corporate programming and strategic direction to regional and country programmes; develop policy approaches that have programmatic application; and strengthen programme coherence between the global, regional and country programmes.

70. UNDP should ensure that global activities capitalize on the comparative advantage offered by its country programmes, wide scope of programming and neutrality as a United Nations agency. Specific attention should be paid to global policy engagement and advocacy, and to facilitating development partnerships. The Global Programme should be leveraged to focus on the programming needs of middle-income countries, serve as a tool for systematically promoting UNDP human development perspectives and other programming principles in country programmes, and act as a catalyst to increase its overall impact.

71. The Global Programme should provide a practical direction to further global and regional development partnerships. UNDP should strengthen partnerships with regional institutions and intergovernmental forums to better contribute to regional public goods. Lessons from the approach followed by the Africa regional programme will be important in this regard.

72. **Recommendation 2: The Global Programme should specifically address the need for more specialized policy and technical services in a small number of programme areas. UNDP should develop a corporate strategy to guide advisory services at the global and regional levels. Advisory services should not become a substitute for country office staff requirements and basic capacities.**

73. To further enhance the effectiveness of advisory services, UNDP should reformulate its Global Programme approach. Advisory services should be provided within the framework of existing areas of UNDP strength. They should be strengthened in areas where UNDP has long-standing programmes; lessons from successful examples of advisory services in areas such as the Millennium Development Goals, parliamentary support, anti-corruption and elections will be useful in this regard. To improve the effectiveness of advisory services, it will be necessary to:

(a) Assess advisory capacities at the global and regional levels in order to determine areas of sub-thematic specialization where in-house advisory capacities need to be strengthened and where outside expertise will be used;

(b) Define the scope of advisory services and provide clarity about the types of services advisers should provide. This will entail narrowing the range of activities currently carried out by advisers and improving the quality of the advisory services in order to increase the effectiveness of strategic support. The generalized service should comprise only small part of the advisory services, which should emphasize global policy engagement, strategic programming support and policy and technical advice. Regional programme advisory services should be used to support small country offices;

(c) Strengthen advisory services by establishing (and then institutionalizing) partnerships with policy and research institutions and think tanks. The current approach to providing advisory services with limited expertise is unsustainable given the demand for specialized services. The roster of consultants did not attract high-level experts to meet this demand. UNDP should make sustained efforts to complement the roster with high-quality expertise that could be drawn from a resource base of institutions and individuals;

(d) Improve the quality of advisory services in order to enhance strategic programming support to country offices. UNDP should develop a common results framework for all the advisory services at the headquarters and regional service centres. There should be results-based targets for advisory services in order to minimize ad-hoc and one-off advisory support. A programmatic approach to advisory services should be followed in order to enable regular benchmarking and tracking of outcomes. Monitoring and reporting should include contributions of the advisory services to global policy and country-level programme outcomes.

74. **Recommendation 3: Through the Global Programme, UNDP should translate commitment into actions by ensuring that systematic knowledge-sharing activities are put in place, and their effectiveness regularly monitored. UNDP should also: (a) institutionalize knowledge-sharing as a key cross-cutting dimension of the UNDP programme; (b) provide incentives at different levels of programming; and (c) address other constraints that impede knowledge-sharing.**

75. The forthcoming Strategic Plan is a defining phase for strengthening UNDP as a knowledge organization. In both the Strategic Plan and the new corporate knowledge management strategy, it will be important to establish accountability for knowledge-sharing and define roles and responsibilities for the global, regional and country programmes. UNDP should focus on knowledge-sharing as a policy engagement tool, systematically collating and analyzing country experiences in order to inform regional and global policy debates. The renewed conceptualization of the UNDP approach to knowledge, innovation and capacity also needs to be articulated in the new strategy.

76. UNDP should pay sufficient attention to different knowledge-sharing components (e.g., knowledge products, tools, distribution, facilitation and learning). Specific efforts should be made to link knowledge efforts of different headquarters programme units (e.g. Human Development Report Office, regional and policy bureaus) to better position UNDP in knowledge facilitation. This is critical for UNDP engagement in global policy and knowledge networks. Also, it will be important to develop a user-friendly repository of quality-assured publications produced by different programme units.

77. UNDP should develop a pragmatic approach to facilitating South-South learning and partnerships at different programming levels, and anchor South-South learning efforts as part of the UNDP knowledge-sharing agenda. This will entail providing adequate resources and tools to support and promote South-South learning; providing concrete support to country offices in systematically facilitating South-South learning and sharing; and developing strategies for engaging with regional institutions and intergovernmental forums to promote knowledge-sharing. UNDP should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of corporate knowledge activities and implement the knowledge management strategy to inform the knowledge-sharing agenda.

78. **Recommendation 4: Integrating gender in UNDP programmes and policy engagement needs to be further prioritized. The Global Programme should ensure that the thematic areas allocate adequate resources for integrating a gender dimension in programme planning and implementation.**

79. A thematic-specific gender mainstreaming strategy with a results focus should be prioritized for strengthening the gender component of UNDP programmes. UNDP should ensure that the global and regional programmes pay specific attention to strengthening support to country programmes in enabling gender-responsive programme design and implementation. Programme staff capacities should be strengthened in order to adequately address gender in programme planning and implementation.

80. Projects and programmes on gender-related approaches should be pursued only when they are of sufficient scale and scope, as projects of small scale and scope have limited traction in scaling up or informing UNDP programming. UNDP should instead make sufficient investments to ensure that large projects across thematic areas have a strong gender component.

81. Further efforts are needed to sustain and strengthen the momentum generated in including gender as part of the UNDP results framework. UNDP should pay specific attention to monitoring gender-related outcomes in all programmes.

82. **Recommendation 5: Enhance the efficiency of the global and regional programmes by establishing clear accountability for more effective coordination between policy and regional bureaus, and by strengthening the regional service centres as a vital link between headquarters and country offices.**

83. UNDP should revisit the alignment framework regarding the roles and responsibility of the regional service centres. The centres' autonomy should be strengthened, given that they serve as the crucial link between headquarters and country offices and support regional policy engagement.

84. The Global Programme management planning and oversight mechanisms should be strengthened for priority-setting and implementation and monitoring. Measures are needed to: (a) set standards linked to specific outcomes for the performance of the advisory services; and (b) develop standards and procedures (including scale and scope) for global projects in order to ensure that resources are used strategically.

85. UNDP should take immediate measures to strengthen evaluations to increase the understanding of progress, constraints and accountability and strengthen evaluation of key programme areas that have implications for strengthening UNDP programmes as a whole, such as policy work, knowledge-sharing and advisory services.